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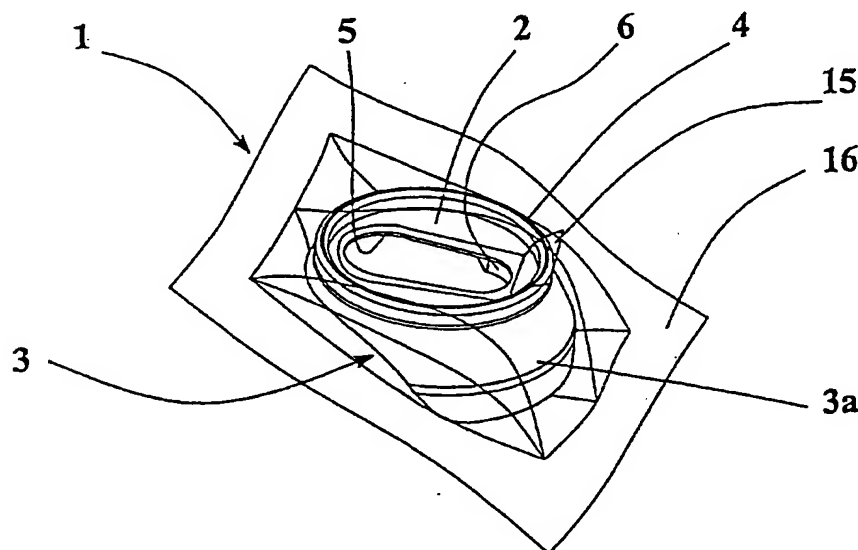
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ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: LIP PROTECTING DEVICE FOR BEVERAGE CAN



(57) Abstract: A lip protecting device for beverage can (10), which includes at least a side wall (13) and a cover (9) including a pouring hole (7) which is closed with a tear closure (8), includes a central portion (2) for closing partially said cover (9) having an almost central slot (5) and a side portion (3) fixed peripherally to said central portion (2) having an extended portion (3a). Said central portion (2) and side portion (3) are fit to detachably overlap said cover (9) and to cover partially said side wall (13) in correspondence of a fruition condition (F) of said beverage in which said tear closure (8) is lifted from said cover (9) in such a way to open said pouring hole (7) and in which said slot (5) is peripherally coupled to the edge of said pouring hole (7) and said extended portion (3a) covers partially said side wall (13) of said can (10), so being a hygienic and safe support for the drinker lips.



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LIP PROTECTING DEVICE FOR BEVERAGE CAN

TECHNICAL FIELD

5

The present invention refers to devices for the fruition of drinks contained in cans and particularly the invention refers to a protecting device for drinkers during the fruition of a drink in a can.

10

BACKGROUND ART

15

It is known that each can has a cylindrical side surface closed by a bottom, usually integral with the can, and by a cover applied on the can top for closing the can after its filling.

20

Said covers have an external raised edge, generally slightly chamfered, carried out by means of a seaming operation with which said cover is firmly fixed to the related can.

25

Furthermore, said cover has a tongue whose lifting opens a cover hole, so allowing a user to drink the beverage, by contacting his lips directly with the can portion between the external edge and the cover opening hole.

30

Such contact, very natural for the user, has a series of drawbacks and dangers since both the lips and the tongue contact directly the pouring hole of the cover which, after opening, has a sharp profile which may easily cut or tear the user lips or the tongue.

35

Furthermore, due to the hygienic reasons it is advisable not to drink the beverage directly contacting the can with the lips, because the can portion contacting the user lips can be dirty or anyway can be strewn with germs and virus which can be extremely dangerous for the user's health, even in the worse situation that the user cuts himself while he is drinking the beverage.

To avoid such kind of drawbacks, some protecting and drinking devices have been provided, among which the most diffused device is the straw.

This device certainly avoids the direct contact of the lips with the can but obliges the user to forcedly suck the drink from the straw that usually has
5 small flow rate of liquid in comparison with the direct fruition.

Other proposed devices provide the use of a sticker or of an edge protector for the can cover, to avoid unhygienic contamination for the drinker of the beverage.

10

The main disadvantage of said devices is that they are generally integrated to the can and therefore are eliminated necessarily together with the can after the fruition of the beverage. Moreover said devices do not protect completely from infecting agents because, generally, at least
15 the user lower lip always contacts the can.

Other disadvantage is that said devices do not protect the edge of the pouring hole, so leaving the risk that this edge is sharp both for the user lips and tongue.

20

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

The main object of the present invention is to propose a lip protecting
25 device for cans to protect completely the lips and the other parts of the mouth of the user drinking the beverage, avoiding not only the accidental cuts and/or the wounds but also the infecting agents eventually present on the can.

30 Other object of the present invention is to provide a device easily applicable to the can and which can be used for more times.

Further object of the present invention is to provide a device of simple and economic production, and of easy use.

35

The objects mentioned above are reached according with the following claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The characteristics of the invention are underlined as follows with particular reference to the attached drawing sheets, in which:

- 5
- figures 1A and 1B show respectively a frontal view of the device, object of the present invention, and a can onto which such device is applied;
 - figures 2A and 2B show respectively top views of the device of figure 1A and the can of figure 1B;
 - 10 - figures 3A and 3B show sectional views, according to the line III-III in figures 2A and 2B, respectively of the device of figure 1A and the can of figure 1B;
 - figure 4 shows a perspective view of the device of figure 1A;
 - figure 5 shows the way of using the device of figure 1A applied to a can during the beverage fruition;
 - 15 - figures 6A and 6B show, in a second embodiment, a top view respectively of the device and a can, on which said device is applied.

20 BEST MODE OF CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

With reference to figures from 1A to 5, numeral 1 indicates a lips protecting device for a can 10, preferably containing beverage, essentially including a side wall 13 closed with a bottom 14 and a cover 9 equipped with a pouring hole 7 which can be opened by means of a tear closure 8 of the can cover.

25

The device 1 essentially comprises a central portion 2 having a slot 5 at the central position, and a side protection portion 3, whose portion 3a is extended.

30

In the preferred embodiment, the central portion 2 has a circular form fit to cover completely the cover 9.

35 Besides, the central portion 2 extends up to a raised edge 4, where begins the side portion 3, which is internally hollow for engaging complementarily and firmly a correspondent edge 12 of the cover 9.

At least partially the slot 5 is provided with a protecting fin 6 which is fit for entering into the pouring hole 7 of the can 10, leaning out to the contour of the can at least in correspondence of the extended portion 3a and so
5 covering the contour of the same hole.

It is very simple and intuitive to use the device 1, because once the tearing tear closure 8 is pulled out in order to open the pouring hole 7 of the can 10, the user superimposes the device 1 onto the can cover 9 so obtaining
10 a fruition condition F, in which the slot 5 faces the pouring hole 7 and the extended portion 3a covers the side wall 13 of the can 10 next to the cover 9 and near to the pouring hole 7.

In this way the drinker leans his inferior lip on the side portion 3 of the can
15 10 and his superior lip on the central portion 2 so avoiding the direct contact of the mouth with the can, which is externally surely strewn with germs and/or bacteria acquired during the period between the production and fruition.

20 As mostly shown in figure 5, the extended portion 3a has such a dimension surely contacting the drinker lower lip, so protecting completely this portion of the mouth.

Besides, the drinker upper lip is protected not only by the central portion 2
25 but also by the protecting fin 6 which particularly avoids eventual cuts and/or wounds caused by the direct contact of the upper lip with the sharp contour of the pouring hole 7.

The slot 5 has such dimensions for allowing free movement of the tear
30 closure 8 of the can 10, when the device 1 is connected to the cover 9. So it is possible to position the device 1 on the cover 9 before acting on the tear closure 8 for opening the can 10 so that this opening operation is not consequently impeded by the device 1.

35 In this variant the device 1 has a protecting film 15 detachably welded on the edge of the slot 5 in order to be torn after the complementary joining of the device 1 with the cover 9, so keeping, up to this moment, the initial

hygienic conditions and without contaminating, by means of the drinker fingers, the external surfaces of the device 1, which will contacts the drinker lips.

- 5 The second embodiment of the device 1, as shown in the figures 6A and 6B, has the semicircular central portion 2 so covering only partially the cover 9 in correspondence of the fruition condition F and, more precisely, covering the cover portion including the pouring hole 7 and near to the extended portion 3a.

10

Such a device, in both embodiments, is carried out as an integral and is made of nontoxic and not allergic plastic material, such as silicone rubber.

- 15 Said device can be removed from an empty can to another filled can, for instance with a previous wash, so that said device 1 can be used for different times.

- 20 It is advantageously to underline that the device 1 in both embodiments can be packed in a disposable packing 16, for instance in a small bag tightly sealed and sterilized.

- 25 The main advantage of the present invention is hence to provide lip protecting device for cans in order to protect completely the lips and the other parts of the mouth of the drinker who drinks the beverage from the can, avoiding cuts and/or wounds as well as eventual infecting agents present on the can.

- Other advantage of the present invention is to provide a device simply applicable to the can and thus reusable several times.

30

Further advantage of the present invention is to provide a device of simple and economic production, also of easy use.

CLAIMS

- 1) Lip protecting device for beverage can (10) which includes at least a side wall (13) and a cover (9) including a pouring hole (7) which is closed with a tear closure (8), said device (1) being characterized in that includes:
- a central portion (2) for closing partially said cover (9) having an almost central slot (5);
 - a side portion (3) fixed peripherally to said central portion (2) having an extended portion (3a);
- said central portion (2) and side portion (3) being fit to detachably overlap said cover (9) and to cover partially said side wall (13) in correspondence of a fruition condition (F) of said beverage in which said tear closure (8) is lifted from said cover (9) in such a way to open said pouring hole (7) and in which said slot (5) is peripherally coupled to the edge of said pouring hole (7) and said extended portion (3a) covers partially said side wall (13) of said can (10), so being a hygienic and safe support for the drinker lips.
- 2) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that furthermore includes a raised hollow edge (4) enclosing said central portion (2) so coupling, almost complementarily and firmly, a related edge (12) of said cover (9) in correspondence of said fruition condition (F).
- 3) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that said slot (5) is at least partially provided with a protecting fin (6) fit for entering into said pouring hole (7) facing the contour thereof, at least near said extended edge (3a) and in correspondence of said fruition condition (F).
- 4) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that said slot (5) has a such dimension allowing the free movement of the tear closure (8) of the can (10).
- 5) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that said extended edge (3a) is fit to be contacted by the drinker lower lip and the central portion (2) is fit for being contacted by the upper lip of the same drinker.

- 6) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that said central portion (2) has a circular shape, which covers completely said cover (9) in correspondence of said fruition condition (F).
- 5
- 7) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that said central portion (2) has a semicircular shape near said extended edge (3a) covering partially said cover (9) in correspondence of said fruition condition (F).
- 10
- 8) Device according to claim 1 characterized in that said side protecting portion (3) is integral with said central portion (2).
- 9) Device according to any one of the preceding claims characterized in that is made with nontoxic and not allergic plastic material.
- 15
- 10) Device according to any one of the preceding claims characterized in that has a protecting film (15) detachably welded on the edge of said slot (5) in order to be torn before said fruition condition (F).
- 20
- 11) Device according to one any of the preceding claims characterized in that said device is packed in a small bag (16).

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FIG.2A

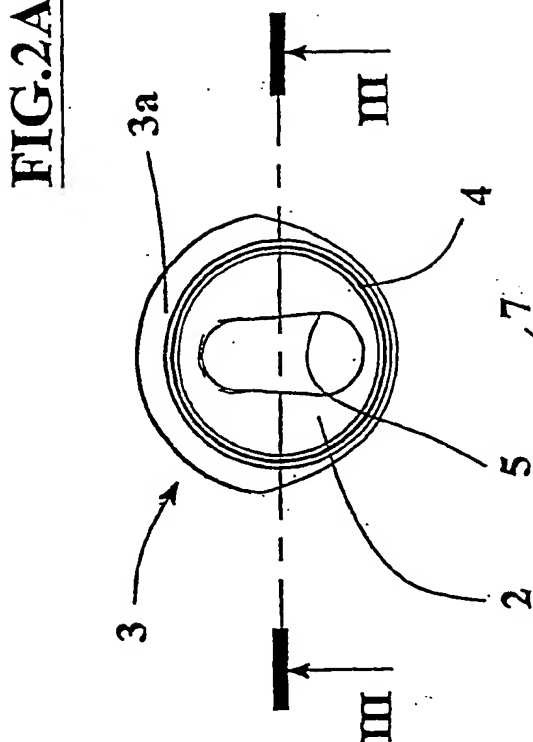


FIG.2B

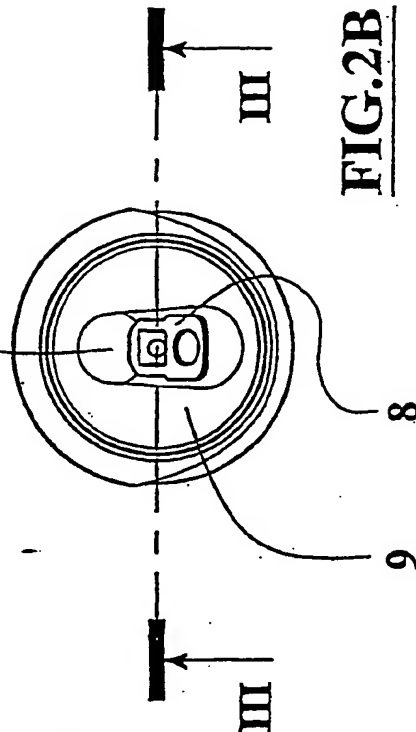


FIG.1A

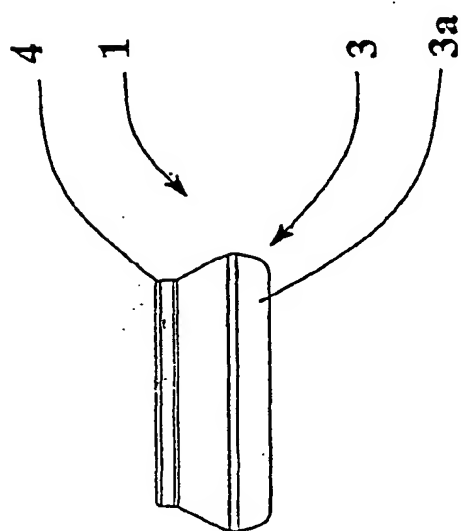
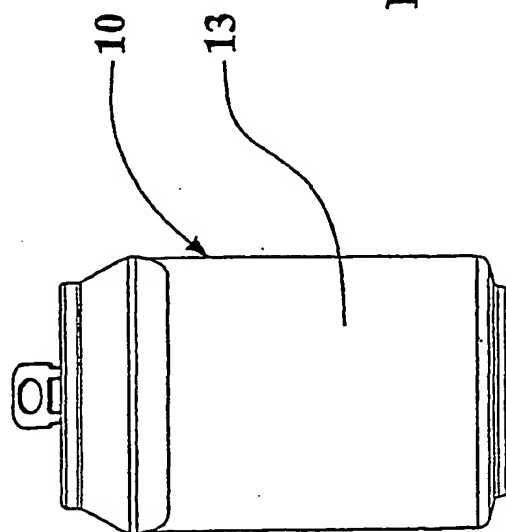


FIG.1B



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FIG.3A

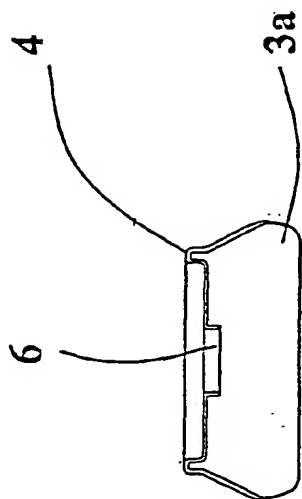


FIG.3B

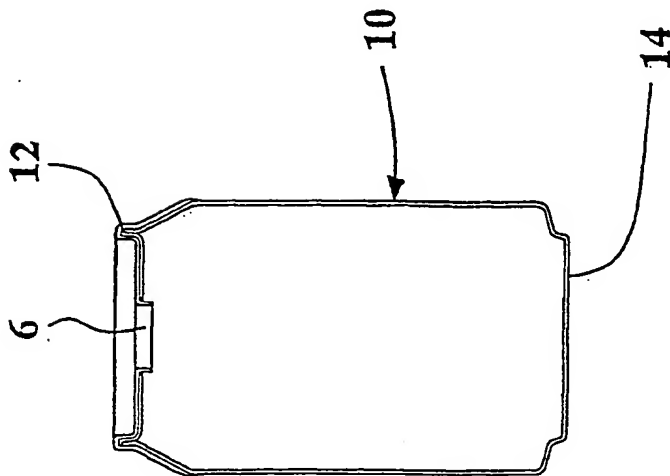


FIG.6A

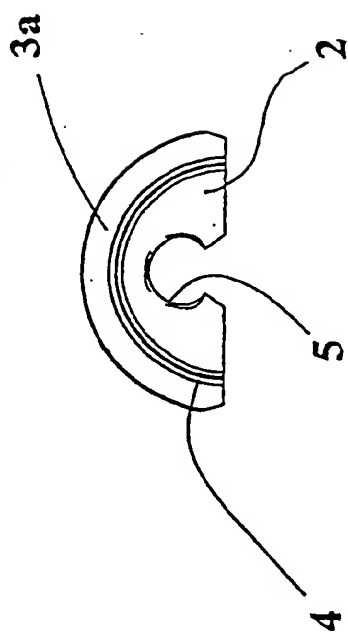
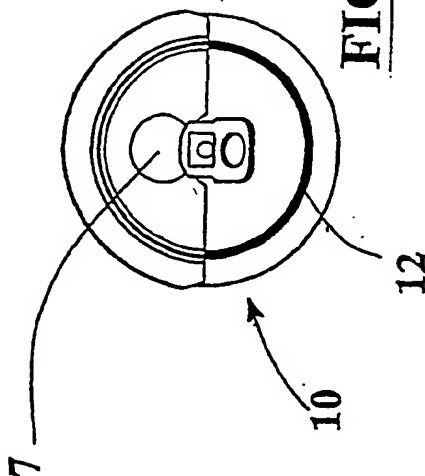
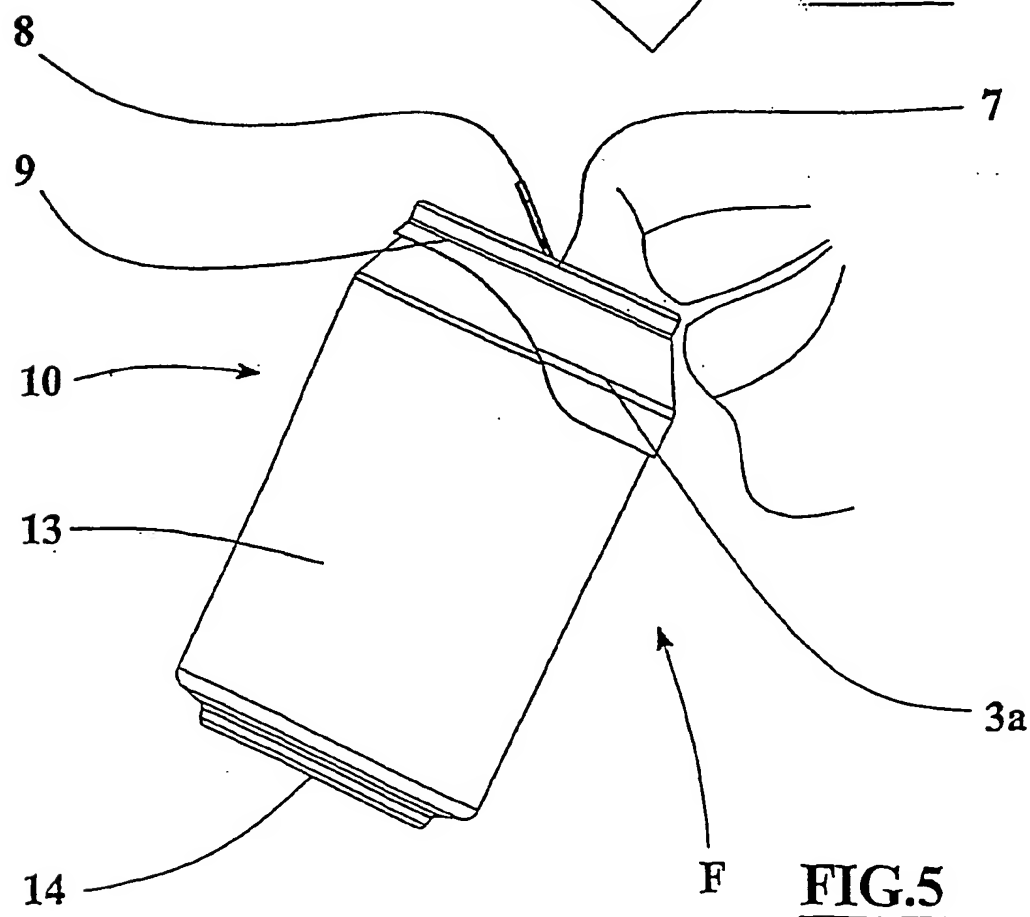
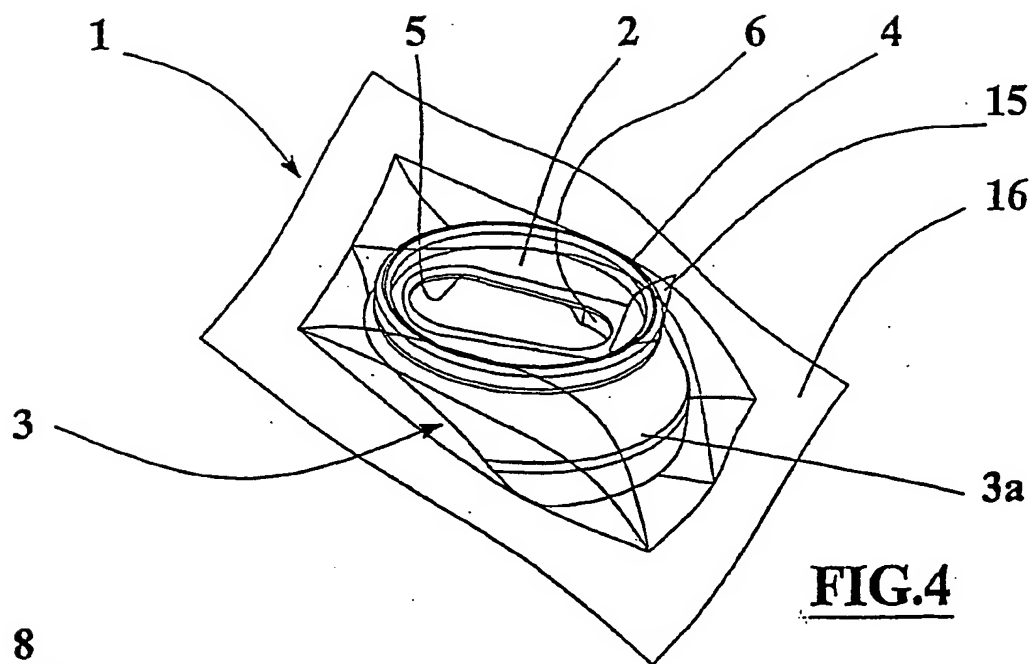


FIG.6B



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No
PCT/IB 01/00388

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 B65D17/34

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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12/07/2001

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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